

Island Packet  
Hilton Head  
Island, SC  
Circ. 20015  
From Page:  
3  
3/22/2010  
65024



145  
U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

# Spouses recoup tuition assistance

Pentagon reverses decision to halt  
program giving aid to military spouses

By PATRICK DONOHUE  
pdonohue@beaufortgazette.com  
843-706-8152

After outrage from military families and federal lawmakers, the U.S. Defense Department has reversed its decision to halt funding of a program that gives tuition assistance to military spouses.

The Pentagon announced earlier this month it would resume the stalled My Career Advancement Accounts program, created in March 2009 to give spouses of active-duty service members and reservists called to active duty up to \$6,000 for college. The money can be spent toward college tuition and costs associated with obtaining professional licenses and certificates, according to the Pentagon.

The Pentagon's recent announcement only covers those already enrolled in the program. The department is not accepting new applications for the foreseeable future, according to a Pentagon news release.

Defense Department officials unexpectedly halted tuition pay-

**"... Military spouses  
may continue to  
receive education to  
obtain portable careers  
in high-demand, high  
growth occupations"**

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-SC

ments to the 136,000 spouses enrolled in the program on Feb. 16, citing an abrupt six-fold increase in enrollment. More than 95,000 spouses registered for tuition benefits during the first six weeks of 2010, an overwhelming number for a program that had registered no more than 10,000 a month during its infancy.

The decision angered military spouses, military family advocacy groups and more than 40 federal lawmakers. U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-SC, wrote a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates asking that the

Please see TUITION on 4A



Island Packet  
Hilton Head  
Island, SC  
Circ. 20015  
From Page:  
4  
3/22/2010  
65024



## TUITION

Continued from 3A

program be resumed

Wilson, whose 2nd Congressional District includes Beaufort County, said he was pleased the Pentagon opted to honor the commitment to military spouses.

"I'm pleased the MyCAA program has resumed operations so military spouses may continue to receive education to obtain portable careers in high-demand, high growth occupations," Wilson said. "I appreciate the (Defense Department) coming to the conclusion that the program should continue for those who have already applied, but I strongly

encourage the expansion of the program to get more spouses enrolled to receive these great services."

Katie Savant, deputy director of government relations for the National Military Family Association, also urged the Pentagon to accept new applicants.

"Many spouses are still in a bind, and while the restart is helpful, Congress must ensure funding is available for military spouses to use in the future," Savant said.

It's unclear how many local military spouses this decision affected, though a spokeswoman for the University of South Carolina said the college billed 30 students enrolled in the program during spring semester.